NEWSLETTER
No. 3

Friends of Meadow Park

SPRING
2003

# GATEWAY PROJECT

The project to transform the Manor Farm Meadow entrance to the park will soon be taking shape.

The competition organised by Sharon Scaniglia, the Borough Council's Arts & Culture Officer, attracted sixteen artists, of whom three were shortlisted. They all visited the village and learned something about the place, meeting over a cup of tea with members of FMP and others. The resulting designs were impressive and all picked up on interesting features of the park and its surrounds. At the beginning of February the winner was announced – Xceptional Designs, by the narrowest of margins.

Model of the winning sculpture, by Xceptional Designs

Xceptional Designs is a partnership of Alex Hallowes and Pete Rogers, based in North Lincolnshire. They specialise in community art projects, and have a very hands-on approach - we the public are definitely expected to get involved in making our own work of art. Alex and Pete intend to spend a week here, probably in April, so there should soon be signs of activity - **and a call to come and help.**

Pete reckons that the old millstone, which is to be the centre piece of the sculpture, weighs about a ton, and he intends to move it from near Kingfisher Bridge, where it has lain since it was unearthed by Rushcliffe workmen in 2000, with ropes and a sledge and *Person Power*. It will get easier after that - promise! - when the task will be to design and decorate a number of cast concrete slabs, under the guidance of Alex and Pete at their workshop.

As reported in the last Newsletter, this project is jointly funded by Rushcliffe Borough Council and East Leake Parish Council. We have just heard that Notts County Council Rights of Way Officer, Jane Baines, who agreed some time ago to rebuild the bridge between Gotham Road recreation ground and the park, has got together with Sharon Scaniglia to consult Xceptional Designs about the possibility of creating a harmonious scheme to blend with the motif of the sculpture. The hope will be that all the work can be done together, so minimising disruption to users. Now, **that's** joined-up thinking!

**RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL** has recently appointed a Community Environment Officer, called Paul Phillips. He has responsibility for assessing all the public open spaces in the borough and advising on their use and management.

He has already visited East Leake, had a walk round Meadow Park, and met with some parish councillors and Friends. We shall all be relying on him to ensure that the agreed maintenance schedule is followed. But much more importantly, we are hoping to draw up with him a long-term management/development plan to realise the park's potential and at the same time protect its character.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – November 2003

**From the Chairman's Report**

"Our first year has been a very mixed one, very much a learning process, showing what we can, and, equally important, what we can't do. As the recent Newsletter emphasised, the power and the money and the general park maintenance lies with Rushcliffe Borough Council and that can be very frustrating……..

"We got off to a very good start. We applied for some charitable funds and were successful. The Chestnut Fund of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers gave us money for insurance (very important that) and for some tools. The Agenda 21 project, funded by Powergen, provided the money for seats ……. and we've been promised a further seat from the Guides once they've found one sufficiently vandal proof (more of that later)……. And funding has been found for the new entrance feature that will incorporate the millstone……. We had a very successful Spring clean up and a very good turnout for the ragwort pull.

"We've also had some disappointments. We arranged with a local farmer to take silage from the southern fields so that eventually the fertility would be reduced and wild flowers encouraged to grow. He took one cut but that was all, and, unfortunately, we have to say that the experiment didn't really work out and next year we shall again have to rely on the Council's cutting contractors and say goodbye to the flower meadow because they won't remove the cut……

Parts of the paths go under water in the wet and the Council say we have to live with that. We've been trying all year to get something done about the southern boundary fence and the access gates and are still trying…….

"But our biggest disappointment has nothing to do with outsiders: it's a Community problem. Vandalism. We've had the bridges burnt, the new seats defaced and cut about, the fence wires cut, the dog bins destroyed. What can we do ? The only thing we're sure about is that we musn't let them win.

On the positive side we should emphasise that the Park is enormously popular. You will almost always see someone there, walking the dog, or watching birds, or children fishing in the Kingston Brook. And the wildlife is increasing. The kingfisher is resident, the heron and kestrel regular visitors. We've had yellowhammers, and linnets and goldfinches. We had moorhens nesting on the Brook, eggs but no fledglings: dogs and moorhens aren't too compatible. All the common butterflies are there, including Speckled Woods, which have never been there before. And 12" chub in the river beneath Kingfisher Bridge. And at least thirty different flowers including Herb Robert and Black Medick and Bird's Foot Trefoil. This, despite our teething problems, is what it's all about!

**Ian Weekley**.

## FRIENDS OF MEADOW PARK – Accounts for period 14/11/01 to 31/10/02

### RECEIPTS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Membership donations | £ | 178.00 | |
| Donations | £ | 50.00 | |
| Grants | £ | 1097.00 | |
| Bank interest | £ | 0.13 | |
| **Total receipts** | | | **£1,325,13** |

### PAYMENTS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Subscription BTCV | £ | 25.00 | |
| Insurance | £ | 153.33 | |
| Publicity | £ | 3.57 | |
| Bank charges | £ | 0.24 | |
| Tools & equipment | £ | 313.95 | |
| Projects | £ | 711.64 | |
| **Total payments** | | | **£1,207 73** |

**Excess of income over expenditure** **£ 117.40**

### Treasurer's note

| | |
|---|---|
| Subscriptions | many members contributed more than the £1 minimum |
| Donations | a small gift of £50 was made to the two farmers who helped with the "tree rescue"; one was returned as a contribution to future projects |
| Grants | BTCV £100 start-up grant, £297 equipment grant<br>EL Town Lands Trust—"tree rescue"<br>Rushcliffe Agenda 21 Powergen Fund—benches |
| Projects | "Tree rescue" - tree stakes and ties<br>Benches—professional help and materials |

EAST LEAKE PARISH COUNCIL

# SPRING CLEAN DAY

## Saturday 5 April – 9.30am till 12noon

Plenty of black bags provided (also reviving coffee and squash), but your own protective gloves and footwear recommended.

Last year, while other volunteers were busy throughout the village, a number of Friends worked wonders in and around the brook.

PLEASE TRY TO JOIN US AGAIN – MEET AT THE PARISH OFFICE

DIFFERENT FACES OF MEADOW PARK

1 Old farm hedge, a haven for birds (photo Mollie Jacques)

2 Rosehips on a crisp day. The gateway into Bateman Field (photo Ann Weekley)

3 A sea of dandelion heads (photo Ann Weekley)

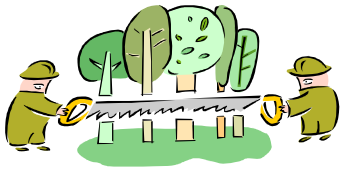
## MANNERS!

One of the best things about Meadow Park is the wide open space it offers for dog walkers to exercise their pets in safety.

The majority of them believe in peaceful co-existence with the many other people who want to enjoy the park as well, and they make use of the "doggy-bins" situated strategically round the park. Unhappily some people do not seem to care that their animals can leave an unpleasant and potentially dangerous mess for the next unwary passer-by.

The Parish Council is asking Rushcliffe Borough Council to erect a couple of strongly worded notices at the park entrances to remind people of their obligations. Nobody expects a dog walker to go chasing after their pet in the long grass, but in the interests of hygiene and the comfort of others, it would be much appreciated if the paths and the 1½ metre mown strip on each side could be kept clean.

## TIMBER



You may remember the last newsletter hinted at a possible future need for woodworkers?

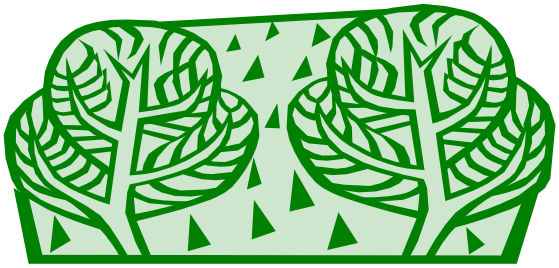
We **think** we have now acquired a few 6ft logs, which would be suitable for conversion into simple benches for the western, more "rustic" area of the park. We hope to get a working party together during the summer to install a few - with guidance, no tremendous skill required. PLEASE help if you possibly can; we'll let you know when the lumber wagon arrives.

# New committee
# New ideas
# New things to do

We managed a few special **efforts** last year, but after the AGM, the committee decided that a new sub-committee with a brief to look at **activities** (note the subtle change of word!) would be the best way to maximise the interest value of the park and offer Friends and others the chance to get to know the place better.

**SATURDAY 3 MAY**

**Committee members and other Friends will lead nature walks around the park, to increase appreciation of its wildlife. There will be bird watching with Max Watson and tree identification with Dennis Fox. Look**



**out for further details, which will be posted on the parish notice boards.**

Dennis Fox and Neil Hunter are currently conducting a tree census, to create a database listing (1) long established trees and hedgerow species from the park's farm days, (2) plantings made by Rushcliffe Borough Council in 2000 and (3) trees and shrubs which the Friends put in last year. In due course, we hope to produce explanatory leaflets and also charts for walkers to complete as they stroll round. If these go well, the Activities sub-committee will look to produce similar identification leaflets for birds and flowers.

More ambitiously, and very much taking a long view of their remit, the sub-committee are investigating ways of financing a series of information boards around the park to add to its interest. Any Graphic Designers out there – please put your thinking caps on.

Major Oak Junior – photo Mollie Jacques

## REQUEST FROM DEBBIE SLADE

It would make the Secretary's life a lot easier if she could get in touch with Friends by e-mail, instead of phone or foot-slog, so if you have an e-mail address, she would be very glad to have it.

Please just identify yourself by e-mail c/o parishclerk@east-leake.gov.uk and you will automatically be put on her list.

Also, may we remind you that there are still a few outstanding subscriptions due for 2003?

## And finally .....

What is this?

A framed copy of one of our collection of Meadow Park photographs for the first correct answer drawn from Debbie's hat on 30 April, 2003.